

# ANRA News

*Serving Colorado's Great Lakes Region*

2014 Edition

USDA Forest Service

Volume 14

## Interview with a U.S. Forest Service boat captain

*Arapaho National Recreational Area boat captain Shawn Rayburn has one of the more unique jobs in the U.S. Forest Service. He is responsible for making sure the area's five reservoirs are maintained for recreation. Visitors pay a use fee that helps fund security, safety and services, as well as improvements such as a new pontoon boat for moving buoys.*

### How did you learn boats?

Growing up in the Finger Lakes region of western New York, my family had motor boats and canoes that we used for fishing and water skiing. My passion for the lakes played a huge role in my decision to join the US

Navy, where I learned the rest of my seamanship skills.

### What kind of boats are on the ANRA lakes?

The Boston Whaler is permanently docked at Shadow Mountain Reservoir and is used for weekend patrols and water quality sampling. Our

other boat, the Sea Ark is used on Lake Granby for patrols, search and rescue, and other lake management duties. The newest addition to our fleet is a working pontoon boat which is used for setting



Capt. Shawn Rayburn

navigational markers on the lakes.

### Why was purchasing a new pontoon boat important?

The greatest advantage to having a new pontoon boat is safety! Having a bigger and better work area is not only safer for the people on deck; it allows us to mark hazards that appear and disappear just below the lake's surface more quickly and efficiently as the water level changes.

## A brief history of Monarch Lake

By Tim Nicklas

*Grand County Historical Assoc.*

East of Lake Granby, smack in the heart of the Arapaho National Recreation Area, lies Monarch Lake. The trails surrounding this body of water are a gateway to paths that scale high into Indian Peaks Wilderness and the rugged, snowy summits of the Continental Divide.

The history of Monarch Lake is contrary to its setting today. The lake itself is the product of human endeavor and industry. Monarch Lake's existence dates back to 1905. In 1904, several Boulder men formed the Monarch Gold and Copper Mining and Smelting Company and filed claims in the area. At the same time, the company decided to form a lumber company to take advantage of the heavy timber in the area. By 1905, the company town of Monarch was under construction to house workers.

The ore shipped from the mines turned out to be very low grade and the mining interest quickly waned at Monarch. Nonetheless, the prospect of lumber was great. The Rocky Mountain

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Setting buoys to mark hazards on Lake Granby.

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## Scientists make discovery about Lake Granby osprey

By Brock McCormick

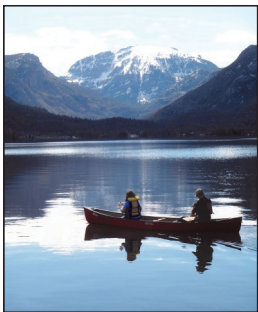
*Sulphur Wildlife Biologist*

Lake Granby has the largest, highest breeding population of osprey in the Rocky Mountain region, but scientists never knew where these birds spend their winters. Understanding how they travel and where they nest is important for wildlife managers working to protect habitat along flyways and winter ranges.

In 2013, biologists from the U.S. Forest Service partnered with Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Rocky Mountain National Park and Mountain Parks Electric to outfit two adult female osprey — "Rainbow" and "Shadow" with satellite transmitters. The solar-powered, lightweight transmitters are worn like backpacks by the birds and will provide biologists with detailed location information via satellite three times a day for the next two to three years.

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## SOAK IT IN



Students enjoy a stunning view of Mount Craig across Grand Lake during Point Park Education Day.

### Did you know?

The largest of the wading birds using the ANRA, great blue herons nest in noisy, messy rookeries with multiple nests at different heights within a group of trees. The highest nests contain the birds with greatest social status. Elephant Island, on Lake Granby, hosted the first great blue heron rookery in the ANRA and was active through 2003. In 2003, some birds left Elephant Island and constructed a new rookery on Harvey Island, also on Lake Granby, where they can still be found nesting from May through September.

## TANGLED



Monofilament collection and recycle efforts continue to be successful with 9 bins maintained by local volunteers.

**To adopt-a-bin** contact Brock McCormick: [bmccormick@fs.fed.us](mailto:bmccormick@fs.fed.us), 970-887-4108

## Osprey

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The transmitters do not interfere with the bird's ability to fly and are designed to cause minimal disturbance.

The ANRA provides excellent summer habitat for osprey and typically supports around 50 breeding pairs of birds that fledge up to 60 chicks per season. Spring weather and summer wind storms heavily influence the success rate of local nesting osprey. This year, 53 breeding pairs found their homes in the ANRA and fledged 45 chicks. The osprey fitted with transmitters both had successful breeding seasons, nesting near Shadow Mountain Picnic Area and Rainbow Bay, both popular osprey viewing sites within the ANRA.

Rainbow and Shadow departed Colorado in mid-to late-September, amazingly leaving the west coast flyway, traveling over the Continental Divide and heading east to Oklahoma before turning south to reach their wintering grounds on the Gulf of



Volunteers from the **Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory** help fit a transmitter on "Shadow" to determine where she spends her winter vacation.

Mexico. These birds traveled approximately 1,700 to 1,900 miles in 10-15 days during their migration.

Stay tuned, as the birds will begin their spring migration back in April or May. You can track their progress, and see their locations to date, by following the 'Osprey Migration' link at [www.RMBO.org](http://www.RMBO.org).

## Capt. Rayburn

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### How often do you have to move buoys and why?

Shadow Mountain has 60 stationary summer buoys because the reservoir stays at constant level. During the spring runoff, we are constantly moving buoys to mark new hazards on Lake Granby. During the fall months, the water level in Lake Granby is lowered and we reposition the docks and the navigational markers as needed.

**What else does a USFS boat captain do?** Using all three boats requires lots of maintenance and up keep to ensure they are ready for any task at any time.

**Why do the lakes need to be patrolled? And do any other**



The ANRA crew moves a floating dock as the water level in the reservoir recedes.

**agencies help?** Since Lake Granby is Colorado's second largest reservoir, our lakes are very popular with boaters. Patrolling gives us the opportunity to educate visitors while monitoring the lake and the

surrounding area. We have a partnership with the Grand County Sheriff's department and deputies join us on our weekend boat patrols.

**What do you do during the winter?** Every year around December the lakes freeze over and the ice fisherman put away their boats and use snowmobiles and ATV's to access their favorite fishing holes. The same patrolling techniques are used except we have a weekend snowmobile patrol to educate people on the potential dangers of ice fishing. We are also responsible for snow removal at all of the ANRA's fee stations and facilities.

**What is toughest part of your job?** Being out on the water.

**What is the best part of your job?** Being out on the water!



## Monarch Lake

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Lumber Company was formed from the mining company and a large lumber mill was imported to Monarch. Additionally, a box factory was constructed. By 1906, a railroad spur was built from the Moffat Road in Granby to Monarch and was operated by the Rocky Mountain Railway Company (the same owners of the mine and sawmill).

As the sawmill and box factory fired up operations, it was quickly realized that it was too difficult to bring logs from the timber cutting areas to the mill site by horses. The company devised that by damming the South Fork River (known as Arapaho Creek today) a lake could be built for the purpose of transporting timber. After the lake filled, a canal was extended from Monarch Lake 1.5 miles west to the town of Monarch. Chutes were built down the surrounding hillsides that sent logs hurling down into the lake. From there, a small homemade steamboat pushed the logs into the canal, sending them on their way to



Looking north from what is the end of Arapaho Bay Road (CR 6) today.

the sawmill.

During the years of the operation of the Rocky Mountain Lumber Company, the town of Monarch had a lively existence. In addition to the mill and factory there were several bunkhouses, a large boarding house, a bowling alley, a store, a school, and several houses. The bowling alley was also used as an assembly and dance hall. Most of the workers for the company were experienced lumber men imported from the forests of Michigan. Japanese and Bulgarian workers laid the tracks of the Rocky Mountain Railway Company from Granby to Monarch.

The life of the Rocky Mountain Lumber Company and the town of Monarch came to an abrupt end in 1908 when a fire destroyed the box factory. As a

result the company went into receivership and closed. The town was abandoned.

The railroad continued to run for several more years, transporting tourists to the vacation camps that dotted the line to Monarch. Most notable among the guest camps at the time was the McDonald Ranch. The railroad was abandoned in 1916, when the United States entered World War I. The rails became more valuable as scrap due to the demands of a war-time economy.

Today, the town of Monarch and much of the railroad bed lays beneath the water of Lake Granby. All that remains from that past are the earthen dam that formed Monarch Lake, the lake itself and a donkey boiler abandoned along its shore.

## Partnership seeks to reduce threat of wildfire to watersheds

A new partnership has formed around the headwaters of the Colorado-Big Thompson (C-BT) Project. The U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Colorado State Forest Service and Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District signed a memorandum of understanding to proactively improve the health and resiliency of forests and watersheds in areas critical for providing and delivering water supplies and hydroelec-

tric power to northern Colorado communities.

The Colorado-Big Thompson Headwaters Partnership is working to establish a joint program to treat hazardous fuels on public and private lands near the C-BT system's headwaters and to preplan wildfire response actions around tributaries and reservoirs that comprise the C-BT collection system.

Most of the C-BT's 10 reservoirs and six power plants are either surrounded by or are located downstream from the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and forested private lands.

The ultimate goal for the partnership is to restore forest landscapes, enhance watershed conditions and protect critical infrastructure across the C-BT system.

## OTTER STUFF



**River otters** are the longest member of the weasel family, using the ANRA year-round. They can be confused with mink, beavers and muskrats that are also dark brown and seen in the same aquatic habitats. To be sure that you are seeing a river otter, look for the long, slender tail covered with fur, and a patch of lighter brown/tan fur on their chins and throats. **Otters are social** and fun-loving and can often be seen swimming and snow-sliding in family groups. Watch for river otters at the west end of Monarch Lake, downstream along Arapaho Creek, and also among the islands and shallow water areas near Pine Beach on Shadow Mountain Reservoir.

## SIT AND RELAX



Ten new benches were installed at **Point Park** in 2013 thanks to help from the ARP Foundation and donations from community members in memory of loved ones. In 2014, a grant from the ARP Foundation will help fund new interpretive signage in the park.

## BRIGHT SOLUTIONS



With more than 300 days of sunshine in Colorado, the ANRA is start utilizing solar to power two of its 11 automated fee stations. The ANRA purchased and installed two solar panels at Pine Beach and Meadow Creek Reservoir fee stations, which were previously powered by marine grade batteries. The solar panel installation will not only decrease the ANRA's carbon footprint, but it will allow employees to spend more time contacting visitors instead of changing out batteries. This project meets the intent of the President's Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007.

## U.S. Forest Service

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Arapaho National Forest  
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Granby, CO 80446  
Phone: 970-887-4100  
Fax: 970-887-4102

**Visitor Center Hours**  
Winter: Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.  
Closed Holidays  
Summer: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.- 6 p.m.  
Open Sat.-Sun. and Holidays  
from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

**GO GREEN:** Sign up for the E-edition of next year's newsletter. Send your full name and email address to [srdupdates@fs.fed.us](mailto:srdupdates@fs.fed.us) with the subject line ANRA News.

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## Serving Colorado's Great Lakes Region

By Dan Matthews  
*ANRA Manager*



Unlike the National Parks, the U.S. Forest Service does not collect entrance fees to most places on the National Forest. However, some places see such high recreational use that Congress has designated them as National Recreation Areas and has authorized the Forest Service to collect fees to help manage safety and security and provide services such as trash collection, restrooms, picnic tables and interpretive signage.

The Arapaho National Recreation Area is the ONLY Congressionally-designated National Recreation Area in Colorado managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Our primary goal is to provide a world-class recreation experience for visitors. The fees we collect each year go directly back to maintaining and improving the ANRA, from managing our boat ramps for summer and winter access to moving floating docks with fluctuating reservoir levels and marking navigational hazards. In addition fees help us monitor water quality, provide interpretive programs in campgrounds, and pay to remove hazardous and fallen trees along roads and trails.

Thank you for supporting the Arapaho National Recreation Area. We hope you enjoy your visit!



## WORK YOUR PASS OFF

The ANRA will hold its 13th annual Work Your Pass Off Day May 17, 2014. Each adult volunteer earns one free ANRA Annual Pass (\$30 value) after collecting trash and debris along shorelines, boat launches and picnic areas following the big thaw.

Participants should meet at Sunset Boat Ramp or Green Ridge Boat Ramp on May 17, 2014, at 8 a.m. Cleanup typically lasts until noon.

Participants should dress for weather changes and are asked to bring their own work gloves, water, and boots for walking on uneven ground.

## District takes on watershed improvement projects

By Kelly Larkin  
*Sulphur Fish Biologist*

Watershed improvement in the Three Lakes area has been a priority for the Sulphur Ranger District for several years. During 2012 and 2013 field seasons, the U.S. Forest Service implemented three projects designed to improve water quality, fish habitat and fish passage in the Three Lakes watershed.

One project was designed to improve water quality and fish habitat in North Supply Creek, which flows into Shadow Mountain Reservoir. The project consisted of hardening two low water ATV crossings, improving road drainage, enhancing riparian areas, and stabilizing the stream at a dispersed camping locations.

Two projects occurred in the Trail Creek drainage, which flows into Willow Creek Reservoir. Located in the Stillwater Pass area, Trail Creek is home to a native cutthroat trout population. The first project replaced a culvert that created a barrier to migrating fish by in-

stalling a bottomless culvert that allows fish and other aquatic organisms to move freely upstream and downstream.

The other project eliminated a known sediment source by rerouting a forest road away from the stream and restored the stream crossing associated with the former route. These two projects, located in close proximity to each other, improved 3 miles of fish habitat for cutthroat trout in Trail Creek.

The Sulphur Ranger District will continue watershed improvement efforts in the Three Lakes watershed in 2014, focusing again on the Trail Creek drainage. The district will be improving a road stream crossing that has failed, which is resulting in damage to not only fish habitat but also the forest road.



Bottomless culvert on Trail Creek.